

4. Onanism [coitus interruptus]

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Onanism also seems to be unknown. No doubt many women have learned this vice through their concubinage with Europeans, but they have not spread it. The same may be said of involuntary onanism. For the native does not look for sensual refinements; rather he follows his natural impulse. (1)

1. The practice described in Chapter X, Article III, 3, may be slightly tainted with onanism; it could certainly lead to such a practice, but it is not caused by perversion.

Article VII. Incest

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We here must distinguish between 1) sexual relations between distantly related kin and 2) between close kin.

1. Among distant relatives

Incest among distant relatives (in the Nkundó sense of the word) has existed since time immemorial. It is called lonkâna (bombakâ among the Bombwanja). Lonkâna is derived from nkâna, "brother, sister." The expression liála j'ôlôlô, "sexual union in the village," is also used. The term lonkâna is applied to relations between members of families which are only very distantly related (not at all related, according to our notions) but between whom marriage is not permitted. Thus one hears that such and such kin groups do not marry each other (bâfôyakumbôlô) but they commit lonkâna. Two kin groups of this sort may be considered closely related clans. The groups between whom lonkâna is practiced each has its own cemetery, while those between whom it is absolutely forbidden share a common cemetery. Thus, to cite an example, the "village" [98] of Elânga l'Imomo l'Ontole (Bongfilâ) is composed of three kin groups, as the name indicates. The Imomo settlement is partially located in the

835 allied district of the Bombomba). The same is true of the Bontole.
614 Elängä and Imomo, together with Eleke (Lokongo), comprise the
posterity of the son of Ambä, who was the sister of Iloko, Elängä, and
Bokungä, the latter being the ancestor of the Bontole. The three
groups do not intermarry. Between the Elängä and the Imomo,
lonkāna relations are also not permitted, but they are practiced with
the Bontole. Note that the term lonkāna is never applied to relations
between truly separate clans, that is, between exogamous entities.

To define the precise limits of this practice we would have to
examine each kin group separately, and this would lead us too far
afield.

It should also be noted that lonkāna may be limited to an
isolated act, or it can become an intermittent concubinage. The
name of the practice does not change when it involves a married
woman who is visiting her family. Sanctions against adultery are
applicable to such a case, however, as to all others. (1) Although

1. See Chapter VI, Article VIII.

the relatives of the woman are more lenient than if the adulterous rela-
tions had occurred with a different lover, the husband whose rights have
been infringed on makes no such distinction.

835 The custom of lonkāna seems rather strange. After all, if
614 sexual relations between these clans are not reprehensible, why is
174 marriage between them forbidden? This is an apparent contradiction
which merits attention. Should not this practice be viewed as a re-
laxation of the law of exogamy? In past times all sexual relations be-
tween members of the clans under discussion would have been forbidden,
a very natural phenomenon when the families originated. [99] Later
the young people would have succumbed to the temptation, and little
by little infractions would even have multiplied. For as the clans be-
came increasingly extended, the temptations became more and more
numerous and the rule, now detached from its natural significance
because very distant kinship was involved, came to seem more or less
arbitrary to the interested parties. It was supported by no sanction or

835 fear. (1) Thus the very number of violations would have gradually
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1. Actually, no sanction is provided against marriages within an exogamous entity; everything lies in the opposition of parents and elders and in a habit which is almost innate.

made the practice customary. Powerless to stop it, the persons in authority, guardians of traditional morality, would have contented themselves with channeling the development and restricting it to a minimum by being lenient on the subject of extramarital relations in order to save the principle of exogamy. This explanatory hypothesis can find a little confirmation in the fact that at the very beginning of colonization when European influence was not felt as yet, there were isolated and very rare cases of marriage in opposition to the law of exogamy between members of groups which were only very distantly related but already practiced lonkâna. The exception then became the rule, and from then on the two groupings in question intermarried regularly and without hindrance, while other families remained under the ancient law. Thus there is the known case of Boyela village (Bakâala), which includes the Bokambâ, Bembakâ, Besidâ, and Bekôlâma (extinct), all descendants of Ngondé and one wife; his union with another spouse gave rise to the Lilekê and the Likongo, to whom Bongilâ, a group related through marriage (likilo), is attached. These two groups of families could not intermarry, but they did engage in lonkâna. Around the time of the first arrival of the Whites, a member of the Bembakâ [100] family a certain Bonjômbô was impelled by an excessive love to violate the law of exogamy by taking Bolondô of Lilekê for his wife. As his love did not cool and the marriage proved stable, it was recognized and accepted as legitimate. Since then the two groups in question have each become exogamous.

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754 2. Between close relatives

Incest between close relatives has no special name of the
As a matter of fact, it never occurs as an outgrowth of the situation. We

835 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery
 754 (boté, plural beté), for which it is the nsimbo, that is, the condition without which the beté would lack efficacy. If the nsimbo is not observed, the boté turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (boesengano), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

[184] The nsimbo of incest does not exist in all boté. It even seems to have been absent from the beté which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern beté, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

1. See Kaptein, in Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

832 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the efóndé and the bontáá. Other modern beté may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (boté w'élangyá) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1. Efóndé

Efóndé (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the

1. Efóndé is often used as a synonym of élangyá in its sexual meaning.

maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of efóndé exist, differing as to the ingredients used, the manner

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567 matters are more important than the father's ancestry. (1)

554] 1. Among the Nkundø no shame is attached to not knowing the family of one's father. But not to be able to name the mother's clan is a great dishonor for it proves that she was a slave.

There is less opposition to the first generation born of a couple who were both slaves than for their parents, and it progressively decreases with each succeeding generation. There is practically no opposition now to the grandsons. The reason seems to be that although receiving a wife from one's master in a regular marriage does not constitute emancipation (nsikø, nsikola) for the slave, it is a kind of adoption (wemya, -emya). [246]

Article III. Kinship

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• 835 Marriage between members of the same kin group (isangano, bosangema, from the verb -sangema, "to be related") is forbidden. But how far does such a kin group extend? It is impossible to give a general rule. On the one hand, it is certain that if two groups are not descended from a common ancestor there is no bond of kinship between them, even if they live side by side. But on the other hand, it is not possible to say that all those who are descended from the same ancestor are relatives and that marriage is forbidden between the various branches of the grouping they comprise. The question therefore amounts to knowing by which ancestor the exogamous grouping is defined. A decision on this point may only be made through the examination of each case individually.

6/4 It is impossible to deduce anything from the meaning of the term clan, for it is usually defined as "a grouping of families united to one another by kinship." This leaves us back where we started. The characteristics usually given for a clan are: generic name,

Nkundu

Pygmies

Batswa

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 64 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form
 582 relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that
 they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing
 explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

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 582 Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship
 835 formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage
 between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

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 [611] It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as
 from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that
 the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than
 descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of
 matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one,
 or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply
 [842] from the Nkundø notions concerning procreation, in which they
 attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that
 [602] greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended
 from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger
 [593] affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which
 is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

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 114 Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the
 582 Nkundø we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this
 matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is
 definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more
 limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction),
 and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elingã. (1)

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 [582] 1. The Batswã are still more liberal, and
 in this respect their practices differ very
 little from ancient European laws and
 customs.

602 brings forth reprimands on the part of the husband and his parents which obviously can easily degenerate into quarrels. If the omissions are so frequent and of such a nature that they can no longer be explained as simply forgetting, a whim, or a fit of peevishness, but [299] are taken to indicate spitefulness or vulgarity, the matter is [627] brought before the ndonga (who is often assisted by the family tribunal) or brought before the authority constituted by the woman's kin. If in spite of everything the expected improvement does not take place, the break-up is inevitable.

606 The husband's father and mother extend the same affection to their son's wife as they feel toward him. They consider her their own child, and it is not unusual to find that their love for the wife equals their feeling for their own son. She is only a relative by marriage, but out of affection for her they call her their child. She, for [604] her part, does not use toward them the term bakanga (or bakiló) but out of filial respect calls them "father" and "mother." Exceptions to this practice may be found, however.

606 If the father (and those who fall in the same category such as 224 uncles, elder brothers, etc.) kills a large game animal, he is expected to give his son's (or brother's, etc.) wife a piece of meat, whose size depends on the number of daughters-in-law he has and which consists of one or several chops (bokálako) (1) and the piece at

1. Called lieto among the Bolengé and the tribes of the Losanganya.

the nape of the neck (botómbyá).

606 Illicit relations between the husband's father and his daughter-
● 835 in-law would be an unheard of crime. The same would be true with respect to any of the "superior" relatives. (2) The laws regulating

2. Only the Boangi -- like the Elángá of the Losanganya -- allow relations between a brother and the wife of his junior; and they are already beginning to find imitators among their neighbors to the southeast, the Injóló.

the relations between a wife and her husband's parents are closely connected with the rules pertaining to the prohibition related to affinity and seems to spring from the same source. Therefore it will be useful to have in mind what we have said in the preceding chapter, Article IV.

The husband's elder brothers treat his wife as their sister. The wife calls her husband's sisters [300] bakilé, but out of respect she often gives them the title of "mother." (1)

[601] 1. Among the Elángá the wife also calls her husband's sisters bongili (pl. bangili); they call her bōngili (pl. bāngili). A wife often calls her husband's mother nyangōngili. Bāngili l'āngili means "the brother's wives and their sisters-in-law."

After the husband's death, as has been said suo loco, his father or his brother may marry his widow. But this practice is not well regarded and is permitted only rarely, chiefly when the scattering of the family patrimony is feared or if the two interested parties have an unusual love for each other.

With respect to children or younger brothers and all those who fall into that category, the situation is altogether different. Illicit relations with wives of their father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother, or elder cousin, are judged much less severely. Generally, misconduct does not give rise to claims for payment, or the payment is demanded "for form's sake" and consists of a hen and a bunch of bananas. By means of this payment the guilty one recognizes his error and renders homage to the right of his elder.

In general public opinion condemns these relations and often with great severity. The question of degree of kinship as well as other considerations result in a great diversity among the cases, so we will examine each situation separately and distinguish each time between the husband's reaction and that of public opinion.

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is
done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The
native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself
and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future
of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty
or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or
two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care
for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
593 for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father
had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time
for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his
harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a
custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

614 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The
554 headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the re-
lated A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not,
however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group;
he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course,
does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded
423 as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between
the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In
general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will
not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory,
if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used
for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for
building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Member-
ship in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the
895 genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of
the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which oc-
curred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-
group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring
within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not
refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a par-
ticularly powerful charm become effective.

614 Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:
There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion
within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively,
all important matters are decided by the group, even those
which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups;
in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat
privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is con-
siderably looser, although on this level particularly one can find
great differences among the individual groups. For example,
the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer

614 to each other than either of these groups with Nsambáááá (see Diagram 2). It was for this reason that in my dissertation I divided this rank into two different ranks (kinship subgroups I^o and II^o). (15) Since there are no obvious criteria for the two

15. Müller, Fürstentum, p. 125.

ranks and since such a division is not possible in the other villages, I no longer make such distinctions.

[582] The groups of rank C are the exogamous units of the future. Although marriage is not permitted between the mem-
[835] bers of different C-groups, sexual relations between them are permitted. This permission corresponds to the lonkana of the Bokóté (16).

16. Hulstaert, "Mariage," p. 97.f.

Groups of Rank D

614 The groups of this category constitute the truly exogamous
582 units. It is true that marriages between "advanced persons" ["évolués"] take place even within rank D, but this practice is still frowned upon by the old people. In Isangi we also find the special stipulation that members of two D-groups, Ngelé and Nkoto, may intermarry, [195] but they may not enter into marriage with members of the D-group, Boléma. Since in present-day Isangi, Boléma is extinct, this stipulation only works to the disadvantage of the emigrants in Boléma w'ási and of the children of sisters in other villages. The Boléma group is regarded as the father group of Isangi (see Diagram 1); Ngelé is the group of the older brother, Nkoto that of the younger brother. This serves as an explanation for the special position of Boléma in the exogamous system. It is said that it would not be right for a "father" to marry one of his "children" even if these children are the offspring of such distant generations that they intermarry.